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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation

Second session
Bangkok, 29–31 August 2018

Annotated provisional agenda

The present document contains the provisional agenda for the second session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation (section I) and the annotations to the provisional agenda (section II).

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the session:
   - (a) Opening statements;
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3. Policy issues for information and communications technology:
   - (a) Promoting the integration and application of information and communications technology policy through the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative;
   - (b) Enhancing space applications in Asia and the Pacific for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;
   - (c) Regional capacity-building on information and communications technology for development.
4. Policy issues for science, technology and innovation:
   - (a) Mainstreaming inclusive technology and innovation policies that leave no one behind;
   - (b) Leveraging technology and trade for economic development;
   - (c) Regional mechanisms for technology transfer for sustainable development.
5. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogrammes.

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6. Consideration of possible draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its seventy-fifth session.

7. Dates and venue of and provisional agenda for the third session of the Committee.

8. Other matters.

9. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its second session.

II. Annotations

1. Opening of the session

(a) Opening statements

The tentative programme for the opening of the session will be available online in due course at www.unescap.org/events/committee-information-and-communications-technology-science-technology-and-innovation-second.

(b) Election of the bureau

The Committee will elect a bureau consisting of two co-chairs, one for information and communications technology and one for science, technology and innovation; two vice-chairs; and two additional vice-chairs to serve as rapporteurs of the Committee.

(c) Adoption of the agenda

Documentation

Annotated provisional agenda (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2018/L.1/Rev.1)

Annotation

The Committee will consider and adopt the agenda, subject to such changes as may be necessary.

In 2015, when the world signed up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – the most ambitious such agenda ever agreed upon – technology was heralded as a key means of implementation. However, the use of technology for sustainable development will not happen automatically. As the fourth industrial revolution begins, the wave of optimism surrounding the future of technology has been tempered by increasing concerns about the potential negative impacts of new frontier technologies. The region is still facing challenges regarding the digital divide and digital skills, and there is a need for more inclusive policies on technology and innovation that leave no one behind.

However, technology is also presenting opportunities. For example, geospatial information services that observe the Earth and collect location-specific big data sets have already shown that they have the potential to transform the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Other opportunities exist at the intersection of technology and other means of implementation. For instance, global trade has accelerated technology transfer while technological advances have spurred international trade.

The Committee deliberations will be twofold. First, deliberations will focus on the imperative of addressing the digital divide. The Committee is invited to propose ways in which Asia-Pacific economies can benefit from the opportunities offered by innovations in information, communications and space technologies to prevent the digital divide from becoming a developmental divide. Second, deliberations will focus on bringing attention to best practices in science, technology and innovation for sustainable development. The Committee is invited to encourage member States to share experiences and lessons learned, and identify policy priorities and areas for cooperation in the following areas: the future of technology; inclusive technology and innovation policy; and technology and trade matters.

Discussions on agenda item 2 will be held in plenary first, and then together with agenda item 3 and 4 in the context of two separate and parallel meetings. The Committee will adopt one report in the final plenary meeting (agenda item 9).

2. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the future of technology

Documentation

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the future of technology (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2018/1)

Annotation

As the fourth industrial revolution begins – a revolution defined by frontier technological breakthroughs such as artificial intelligence, robotics, 3D printing and the Internet of things – it will be critical for frontier technologies to work for society and the environment as well as the economy if the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda are to be achieved.

Frontier technologies offer a multitude of opportunities. From an economic viewpoint, the adoption of technologies and innovations in production processes could increase overall productivity and expand production possibilities. In terms of social impact, frontier technologies could transform public service delivery, reduce inequality and support inclusion. From an environmental perspective, they can be used to address evolving environmental changes pre-emptively. Notably, the expanding array of tools and services offered by big geospatial data sets is strengthening evidence-based and real-time decision-making.

However, there are challenges with respect to the impact of frontier technologies on jobs and the future of work, ethical issues, regulatory considerations, and the key challenge of the current and potentially widening digital divide leading to further disparities.

Asia and the Pacific is a leading region in the development of frontier technologies and is forecast to be a prominent market of the future. Governments in the region have also been at the forefront of innovative policymaking on this agenda. This prominent position means that Governments in the region have the opportunity to shape the role and scope of frontier technologies.

The present document contains an overview of the development of frontier technologies in Asia and the Pacific. Key opportunities and challenges presented by frontier technologies across the three dimensions of sustainable

development – economic, social and environmental – are highlighted. A number of key policy priorities are proposed with a view to (a) forming the basis of a next-generation technology policy framework for the future as influenced by the fourth industrial revolution; (b) ensuring that frontier technologies are more deliberately aligned with the ambitions of the Sustainable Development Goals; and (c) addressing the digital divide and associated frontier technology divide so that no one is left behind.

The Committee may wish to discuss issues raised in the document, share experiences and lessons learned, and identify policy priorities and areas for cooperation to ensure that the future of technology is aligned with the 2030 Agenda.

3. Policy issues for information and communications technology

(a) Promoting the integration and application of information and communications technology policy through the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative

Documentation

Implementation of the Master Plan for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway and the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Regional Cooperation Framework Document (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2018/2)

Major issues and emerging trends related to digital technologies and regional broadband connectivity (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2018/3)

Master Plan for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, 2019–2022 (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2018/INF/1)

Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Regional Cooperation Framework Document, 2019–2022 (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2018/INF/2)

Annotation

In its resolution 73/6, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific invited members and associate members to cooperate in the implementation of the Master Plan for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway and the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Regional Cooperation Framework Document, and to promote broad-based partnerships, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, to that end.

Under the present agenda item, discussions will focus on activities undertaken in the implementation of the Master Plan and the Regional Cooperation Framework Document, touching upon multi-stakeholder regional cooperation and other aspects with respect to facilitating the regional and subregional implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative. Discussions will also cover major issues and emerging trends related to digital technologies and regional connectivity, and opportunities and challenges affecting member States in implementing the World Summit on the Information Society action lines in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Committee may wish to discuss the issues raised in the documents in view of rapid technological advancements and the need to share good practices and lessons learned in this area.

(b) Enhancing space applications in Asia and the Pacific for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

Documentation

Enhancing space applications in Asia and the Pacific for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2018/4)

Annotation

Geospatial information services, encompassing the application of space and digital technologies to observe the Earth and collect location-specific big data sets, have already shown that they have the potential to transform the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The document contains examples of emerging solutions to some of the most pressing issues facing humanity, ranging from food security, energy, natural resources management and climate change to disaster risk reduction and resilience-building. Although the Asia-Pacific region has achieved remarkable progress in the application of space and digital technologies, challenges remain in improving the broad and in-depth application of these technologies and collaboration among the stakeholders. For many developing countries, limited infrastructure and financial resources, a shortage of human capital and a lack of technical capacity can impede the application of such innovative technologies, rendering them underutilized.

The Committee may wish to discuss the issues raised in the document and propose policy action to promote the utilization of geospatial information services for sustainable economic and social development.

(c) Regional capacity-building on information and communications technology for development

Documentation

Report of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its activities during the period 2016–2018 (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2018/5)

Annotation

The report contains a description of the programmes and activities of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development in the area of human and institutional capacity-building on the use of information and communications technology for inclusive and sustainable development. A panel discussion will be held on national experiences in that area, followed by a general discussion.

The Committee is invited to take note of the report.

4. Policy issues for science, technology and innovation

(a) Mainstreaming inclusive technology and innovation policies that leave no one behind

Documentation

Mainstreaming inclusive technology and innovation policies that leave no one behind (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2018/6)

Annotation

Technology and innovation are key means of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. They have the potential to increase the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of efforts to meet the ambitious 2030 Agenda, and create benefits for society, the economy and the environment. However, technology and innovation can also be a source of inequality and exclusion. An inclusive innovation movement is under way in the Asia-Pacific region, with policies and initiatives emerging that include marginalized groups in the innovation process, address the needs of disadvantaged groups and make innovation accessible to the very poorest people. In the document, a variety of available avenues are presented for promoting technology and innovation policies that are inclusive and leave no one behind.

The Committee may wish to encourage member States to share national experiences, including good practices and lessons learned, in promoting inclusive technology and innovation policies that leave no one behind. The Committee is invited to indicate policy priorities and areas for cooperation to ensure that technology and innovation contribute to realizing inclusive societies and markets. The Committee is also invited to indicate what support may be required, such as training, research or advisory services, from the secretariat to promote inclusive technology and innovation.

(b) Leveraging technology and trade for economic development

Documentation

Leveraging technology and trade for economic development (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2018/7)

Annotation

Technological progress and trade are inextricably linked. Global trade has accelerated the spread of innovation and technology. In addition, technological advances – particularly in the areas of information and communication, transport, and electronic commerce and payment – have spurred international trade. Technology continues to reshape international trade today, impacting not only what is considered trade but also how goods and services are traded. Electronic commerce and paperless trade are just two examples of how technology is changing the way in which trade has been conducted traditionally. Trade, technology and industrial policies all impact the development of particular sectors and industries, and therefore, directly or indirectly influence technological learning and progress. Historically, these policies have helped a few countries in the region to catch up. While policies today still play an important role in economic development and technological upgrading, certain measures that affect trade by protecting domestic markets or promoting exports are prohibited or restricted under multilateral trade agreements.

The Committee is invited to reflect on the opportunities and challenges related to leveraging technology and trade for economic development by sharing experiences and lessons learned in these areas. Furthermore, the Committee is invited to identify policy priorities and focus areas for regional cooperation to guide the work of the secretariat.

(c) Regional mechanisms for technology transfer for sustainable development

Documentation

Report of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology on its activities during the period 2016–2018 (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2018/8)

Annotation

Under the present agenda item, discussions will focus on regional mechanisms for technology transfer for sustainable development. The report contains a description of the programmes and activities of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology in the following areas: human and institutional capacity-building on science, technology and innovation policy; the strengthening of national innovation systems; new and emerging technologies; and technology transfer and commercialization.

The Committee may wish to provide input and suggestions to support and strengthen the Centre's work for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

5. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogrammes

Under this agenda item, the Committee may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on the focus of the short- and long-term work in the area of information and communications technology and science, technology and innovation, respectively, taking into account the programme direction and priorities outlined in the strategic framework for the period 2018–2019. The Committee may also wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on incorporating the outcome of the Committee's deliberations into the secretariat's strategic planning process, including the preparation of the programme of work for 2020.

6. Consideration of possible draft resolutions for submission to the Commission at its seventy-fifth session

Member States may wish to circulate, in advance, proposals for or texts of draft resolutions on priority issues relating to information and communications technology and science, technology and innovation for consideration by the Commission at its seventy-fifth session.

7. Dates and venue of and provisional agenda for the third session of the Committee

The Committee may wish to discuss the tentative dates and venue of and provisional agenda for the third session of the Committee, to be held in 2020.

8. Other matters

The Committee may raise any matter not covered under the items mentioned above.

9. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its second session

Documentation

Draft report (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2018/L.2)

Annotation

The Committee will consider and adopt the report on its second session for submission to the Commission at its seventy-fifth session, to be held in 2019.